

Evidentiary Document #5045.

Evidence taken before Mr. Justice MANSFIELD in Sydney on Friday, 16th November 1945.

[NX33886 Cpl. CROFT, George Alexander, AAOC, attached 2/30 Bn, being duly sworn gives the following evidence;

I am NX33886 Cpl. CROFT, George Alexander, AAOC, attached 2/30 Bn. On 23 January 1942 I was in St. Patrick's Hospital with tinea. I was boarded for home; however, Major Hunt came in for volunteers to relieve the sick men and I volunteered to go. We were in the skin section at St. Patrick and we were taken to the main hospital at Katonga. We were put into two trucks which had the Red Cross on the bonnets. The first truck went out and was immediately followed by the second in which I was travelling. We had not gone very far when the first truck pulled up, spun round, and went back past us. We attempted to turn, got half-way round on the road, and a machine gun opened fire on us. The truck was hit and it stopped across the road. A few of those in the back of the truck got out and ran and got away. We, however, were surrounded and taken by the Japanese, who made us sit down so we could not escape.

An Australian officer from the Con Depot came up, arguing the point with the Japanese and asking that we be taken back as we were sick men. Actually, we were supposed to be going to the Con Depot in Singapore. The Japanese would not listen. One chap who was hit through the knee with a machine gun bullet was allowed to go but not the rest.

They marched us along the road level with the machine gun post and turned right away from Katong. We were taken about three miles by road and placed in native huts. There were nine Australians. In the room there were civilians - Europeans and Tamils. We were made to sit on the floor where we could get in and were not questioned at all.

[We were there so long and the Japanese guard came in and took out three men with their hands tied together. We thought they were being taken out for questioning; it was not long before three shots rang out and left no doubt as to what had happened. They kept coming in and going out, taking three each time and then there would be more shots.

I was in the last three to go. We were taken to the front room and made to sit down and then blindfolded. We were then led outside, still tied together, and made to sit down not far from the house. It was not long before something crashed into me and I was knocked back. I was caught by the heel and thrown into a drain. I knew what would happen if I moved so I just lay there. Later I slipped the blindfold and had a look. I couldn't see anyone about and it was getting right on dark then and so I untied myself, slipped off my boots and crawled out of the drain. I got through a double barbed wire fence, my idea being to go back to Katong Hospital. I was wounded a bullet having entered the left side of my head about the cheekbone and out on the right side of the back of my neck. I was spitting blood, and there was blood everywhere. I sat down under a tree to rest. It was dark and I

was in a rubber plantation. I went to sleep and never woke till dawn. I started off and started to get weaker and weaker and I was getting bushed. I did not know then that capitulation had taken place the night before and natives I met would not have anything to do with me. Then I discovered I could not speak.

I wandered round and round and finally came to a place where Portuguese people, a man and his wife and a few children, lived. The woman wanted to wash me as soon as she saw me. They spoke English, but this chap told her not to interfere with me as it might do me more harm than good. They gave me a cup of coffee and it ran out the side of my neck. He took me down the road and put me on the track through the bush leading to the hospital. A little Chinese girl ran ahead to the hospital and two orderlies came out and met me. They were Australian orderlies from the A.G.H. and they took me into the hospital from there. I was six months in hospital.

I could not identify the men who fired on the ambulance and later did the shooting, but most of them wore big bushy beards; they were in uniform.

I have difficulty in speaking. I get a cold easily and cannot swallow food correctly. If I get anything hot I slobber and I also get bad cramps from the side of my face down to the throat. The bullet cut the back of my tongue. [I never spoke from February to November,] and I had to be fed through a tube. I spent the rest of the period in Changi as a prisoner of war. I was in charge of the bootmaking branch and had 32 bootmakers under me. I was servicing everyone's boots - Italian, Dutch, British, Australian, Japanese and Koreans.

When the Japanese sent their boots to be mended in most cases they sent material with them. We had a Korean quartermaster at the store all the time and they had their own material locked up in a locker. When we wanted to mend Australian and English boots we used motor tyre and also had some stuff manufactured out of raw latex. They also supplied us with a bit of yukla which was not much good. Old kit bags were cut up for uppers. We did 70, 80, 100 repairs a day and had two shifts running for a long while. We used to work from 8 or 9 in the morning to 5 p.m. and then the other shift would come on and work to 10.30 at night. I wore wooden clogs which I made for myself or any old pair of boots at all.

I had no trouble with the Japanese as regards lashings.

Quite a few Japanese officers came in and also Japanese and Korean soldiers. I spent quite a lot of time making sword belts for them also. The Korean quartermaster was Oyama Debushi, who was a good type as they go.

We had no boot repairing equipment. In the later stages, after we had struggled along for about two years, they brought out from town about a dozen pairs of pinchers, which were useless.

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The Japanese had their own army boot shop at Singapore but I never saw it. They had machinery there. The reason they took their boots to us instead of taking them there was that they were getting a better job from us than from their own people. The Chinese did an excellent job but they were also getting an excellent price at that time and they were getting it done from us for nothing.

I was in the Sclerang Square incident. I know a chap who has photos of it and I will try to get some for the Commission.

I certify that this evidence is true and correct.

Taken before me at Sydney)

on Friday 16th November 1944)

(Signed) A.J. MANSFIELD.)
Commissioner.)

(Signed) G.A. CROFT.

No. 1

Doc 5045

NY 1503-A

一九四五年(昭和二十年)十一月十六日、金曜日「シドニー」
於テ「マンズフィールド」判事殿ノ面前ニ作成セラレタル證言
「ジョー・アレキサンダー」ニ對シテ「證言」口述書

2/30 大隊所屬 A. A. O. NX 三三八八六 伍長「クロフト」
ジョー・アレキサンダー「は宣誓の上次の如き證言をした。

私は2/30 大隊所屬 A. A. O. CNX 三三八八六 伍長「クロフト」
ジョー・アレキサンダー「である。一九四二年一月二十三日頭癪
でセント・パトリック病院に入院して居た。私は帰還船
に乗船した。ハント少佐が病人救助の志願兵を募集
に来たので行くことを志願した。

私はセント・パトリック病院の皮膚科に居た。カトニカの本病院
へ連れて行かれた。私は「十字」のついで居る二台のトラック
に乗せられた。第一のトラックが出発し、直ぐ後に私が乗った第
二のトラックが之に續いた。一時間遠く行かないうちに第一のト
ラックは止まり、後戻りして我々の車と遇つた。私は
曲らうとして道路上で半分程廻つたところ、銃撃を受けた。
トラックに命中し、道路上に横になつて止まつた。トラックが
後部に乗り、我々を救ふは跳び下り走り逃げた。然し
乍ら私は包圍され日本人に捕はれた。

私は道に沿つて三マイル程連れて行かれ、土人の小屋に入
れられた。其処には九名のオーストラリア人が居た。

No. 2

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私達は其処に長い間居たが日本軍の歩哨が入つて来て三名の者の手を珠數つなぎにして連れ去した。私達は彼等が訊問に連行されるのだと思つた。間もなく銃聲三発が聞えたかう何が起こつたか疑ひ餘地はなかつた。彼等は幾度も入つて来ては三人づつ連行した。間もなくすると銃聲が聞えた。私は最後に連れて行かれた三人の内一人であつた。私達は表の部屋に引き出され、^坐されてかう目隠しされた。それから一編に縛られたまゝ、外に連れ出され、家から程遠くない所に^坐された。間もなく何物か大音と共に私に落ちかかり、私は後になぐり仆された。そして踵をつかまれ、と下水溝に投げ込まれた。私は勤とどんなことになるか判つて居たかうた。其処に横になつて居た。後で目隠しを取つて見廻した。私は誰も側に居ない、わかれかつた。其の時日が暮れ暗くなつた。私は自分で縄を解き靴を脱ぎ下水溝から這ひ出た。私はカートンガ病院へ帰らうと思つて二重の刺附針金の圍ひを潜り抜けた。銃弾が頭部左側の頬骨あたりから入つて後頭の右側に抜けるといふ負傷を受けて居たのである。……そして私は話の出来なうことに気がついた。

私は二月から十一月迄全然話をすることが出来なかつた。

以上